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### The Bebop

They were all whores anyway, even the younger ones. Thus Randy Midden didn't feel all that bad to be alone in the vast, snow-filled parking lot of the shopping center, crunching towards the blue Dodge Aries he had parked far out from harm's way, just inside a circle of weak yellow-white light. "It's a curious--of the light. Osssity. Cure-osity. Curiosity!" he explained to no one in regards to the narrowness of the car he approached head on, experiencing a wave of despair as he imagined trying to explain such a phenomenon to the girls he left behind him at the Bebop Cafe. "Bends rays, something... forget it." But even in his distrust of women's general intelligence, Randy tried another illustration: "See? Looks like color of puddles, car does, like puddle stood up."

It seemed at that freezing moment the most hilarious image ever invented and Randy hugged himself and giggled, puffs of dark vapor surrounding his scarlet face.

The pickup with the huge knobby wheels and enormous mirror-finish bumper was gone from atop the snowbank beside his space. It would have been pointed up past the moon, so bright and high now, but too low for the young man trying to pose next to that truck earlier, his leather jacket ballooning and his white scarf whipping as his boots slid sideways--moon behind his tremulous underbelly.

Idiot, recalls Randy, as a snowy wind slams him. "Idiot!" Randy Midden had pronounced earlier as his hand reached for the cold brass handle of the door to the Bebop Cafe.

Despite his efforts to remain stock still, Pepper Stutzman, the now twice-remembered idiot, had slid entirely down that snowbank and into the blue Aries, as Randy Midden was still strolling to the Bebop. Pepper Stutzman spat on the car and pronounced "Wimp Bucket!" And then, having nothing else to do, he followed the wimp who owned it into the Bebop Cafe, where he met Traction, another member of the Four-Wheelers. "Stutz-my-man, this place sucks," Traction informed him. Traction sported a glass eye from a hot-rodding accident, and Pepper always stared at that eye as if not to do so was rejecting a challenge.

Traction nodded towards Randy Midden who was already talking down to two blonde sisters seated on the floor amid lurching dancers. "Talker," sniffed Pepper Stutzman. "You gotta be talker. Like that asshole."

"We don't like talkers," affirmed Traction.

"We don't deal with no lines of shit," Pepper Stutzman

informed him over the throttling bass of the huge speaker they sunk down next to on the apron of the empty stage, "'cause what we say we do, and what we want we take."

"Amen, Stutz-Bear." Traction pointed to the S T U D stencilled on his t-shirt.

For the next two hours the young men sipped Old Milwaukee from resonating styrofoam cups, and considered the verbal and prancing techniques of Randy Midden. Finally Traction offered, "Let's take him out and fuck him up the ass," his good eye blinking violently.

"Not classy enough," issued the light, shy, laugh from Pepper Stutzman as a tape changed with a clunk.

"Then what? Stutz-My-Man, our leader!"

"I'm, whatchacallit, thinking." While incomprehensible punk music spewed from the speaker next to them, Traction thought a moment about what Pepper had just said. Eventually he blurted, "I can't stand this fuckin place no more. I gotta move, Amigo." He stood up and a dancing couple avoided him drastically.

"Go fuckin home then, Traction."

"No-o-way!"

"That's an order. I'll call you when I decide."

"I haven't got all fuckin night and besides, when I get there the old lady'll whine about my never staying home."

"I gotta piss, man. Man where you piss?" a greenish youth in a pink

tomahawk haircut inquired of Pepper Stutzman.

Pepper threw his arm at the hundred dancers just before a wave of them engulfed the youth whose pink hair bobbed in their midst.

"Anywheres, man. Like...anywheres," he shrugged.

"I aint fuckin kidding!" the youth told someone as Pepper turned back to sneer at Traction, "We threw out a lot of shit about the regulations in our constitution to let married assholes join." Pepper's clear eyes drilled into Traction's glass one. "We can change that shit you know. Now give her a quick fuck and stay by the phone."

"That an order too, Stuntman?" "Engage. And give her one for the club." Engage meant put your vehicle in four-wheel drive, and therefore, get with it, or sometimes, in a milder tone: okay, right.

"I have to give her the gift. I'm loyal to the club."

"All there is that's worth it. And don't you forget it! Brothers before bitches!" Pepper punched him on a bare arm in a grazing way. "Now get your coat."

"I don't wear no coat. Hey! I'm a Four-Wheeler!"

Randy Midden was attempting to grope a fat, drunken girl in the forest of coat racks adjoining the wall holding the telephone when Pepper Stutzman made his call to Traction, directing him to phone the others.

"Engage?" Pepper signed off.

"Engage engage!" Traction indicated that nothing could go wrong.

It didn't. Under Pepper Stutzman's direction, the high knobby-tired pickups formed a circle with the blue automobile in the center; then after his scarf and Hitler salute shot through his glistening truck's open window, along with his shrieking "Engage!" the trucks fishtailed in furious white smoke. A few seconds later, throwing snow straight back, they ploughed into that Aries with the simultaneous precision of the club's Wimpmobile Mash. After impact they careened off in different directions, later to convene near the opposite end of the shopping center at SEAR'S AUTOMOTIVE EMPLOYEE PARKING, since Pepper knew of a Camaro with a bottle of Mad Dog under the front seat.

He toasted them all with blood trickling down his hand because he had to smash the window when Traction, t-shirt stiff with icy sweat, couldn't pick the frozen lock.

"Better get that hand looked at, Commander," the blue-armed Traction shook.

"Man it's fuckin nothing!" admonished Pepper Stutzman.